

RECENT TRENDS IN RURAL MIGRATION: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Most of the developing economies are experiencing the phenomenon of migration of the rural population to urban areas. This is attributed to industrialization and urbanization. The movement of human beings could be due to several reasons like demographic pressure, uneven distribution of natural resources, technological progress etc. The modern sector has a high marginal productivity of labour and wages are paid accordingly. Due to higher wages and expanding demand for labour in this sector, the migration of labour takes place from the subsistence sector specializes in the production of manufactured goods, while the rural or subsistence sector specializes in agriculture sector. Thus migration into urban centres in general in India, was such that the metropolitan cities had grown at a much faster rate than other areas. The proportion of urban population to the total did not change in any appreciable manner until the 1921 Census after which, it increased gradually. It is pertinent to look into the various factors influencing migration of the people from one place to another. In the case of unskilled and semi skilled jobs, it is generally true that any shift from the primary to the secondary and tertiary sectors represents migration initially, this kind of migration is usually within the rural areas- from agricultural to non – agricultural and subsequently from rural to urban areas.

Finally, Indian data suggests that, the interdependent between town and village is well advanced, a highly differentiated migration flow can take place and is increased by a mal-distribution of village resources.

Keywords: Rural migration, Labour, Agriculture, Industrialization, Urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the developing economies are experiencing the phenomenon of migration of the rural population to urban areas. This is attributed to industrialization and urbanization. The movement of human beings could be due to several reasons like demographic pressure, uneven distribution of natural resources, technological progress etc.

The process of theorization of migration began in the 19th century. It has been discussed by sociologists, geographers and economic factors as causes of migration. They have focused their attention on the causes and consequences of migration. Economists are discussing the role of wages, incomes, levels of employment and unemployment in influencing migration flows. According to dual economy model (Lewis, 1954, Fei and Ranis 1961)¹ migration of labour is from the subsistence sector (mainly agriculture) marginal productivity of labour is very low, as even zero, but wages are paid according to subsistence cost. The modern sector has a high marginal productivity of labour and wages are paid accordingly. Due to higher wages and expanding demand for labour in this sector, the migration of labour takes place from the subsistence sector specializes in the production of manufactured goods, while the rural or subsistence sector specializes in agriculture sector.²

Thus, the process of migration takes place through visible rural-urban wage differential; The higher wages in the urban modern sector act as incentives for attracting the rural labour towards the urban areas. The migration process is treated as an integral part of the overall modernization and development of the economy. Its pace and scale is determined by the rate of expansion in the modern sector and the availability of surplus labour in subsistence sector. The modern sector workers are mainly drawn from the villages, and they are moving from rural areas to urban areas. The movement of population from agricultural sector to industrial or urban centres leading to population agglomeration and urbanization.

MIGRATION SCENARIO

Migration of labour started in India during the period of British Colonial rule. It was aimed at meeting the requirements of capitalist development both in India and abroad. The labour was moved from the hinter land to the sites of mining plantation such a manner that women and children remained in the villages while males migrated to modern sector.

This system changed in the post-colonial period. Capitalist development in India got a filling under the system of planning introduced by the Government of India in the Fifties. With the introduction of a programme of industrial development, the agricultural economy began to grow and develop initiating a transition from pre-capitalist towards capitalist relations. Capitalism widened its base into the rural areas.

As a result, a massive migration of labour took place into modern enterprises and the expanding provincial and central government establishments, largely located in the urban areas. This also led to uneven pattern of development, with some regions growing faster and other lagging behind. The migration of population took place from lagging areas to the advanced areas. The pattern of migration was such that sons and to less extent daughters of the rich farmers moved to secure jobs in the cities and big urban areas while the children of labourers moved to villages and smaller towns to take advantage of the shifts in employment opportunities. At the same time a section of labourers continued to move into urban centres all alone and work at individual wages rates largely in the informal sector.

Thus migration into urban centres in general in India, was such that the metropolitan cities had grown at a much faster rate than other areas. The proportion of urban population to the total did not change in any appreciable manner until the 1921 Census after which, it increased gradually. By 1971, one fifth of India's population had become urban and in 1980, the urban population rose to 23.7 percent. India's urban population increased by two and a half times from 62.4 million to 156.2 million this was the third largest urban population in the world and was much higher than the total population of any country, except China, Soviet Union and USA in 1980-81.

In 1991 the migration percent was 27.4 percent of Indian population. As a matter of fact, the urban population has been growing three times greater than that of rural due to the flow of migrants from rural areas, annexation of surrounding rural areas and demographic pressure. During the 1990 there were economic reforms put in a place to attract foreign direct investment by way of regulation for certain sectors and liberalization of capital flows. The liberalization did not help improve the situation as cities continued to grow and the objectives of poverty alleviation and development of rural infrastructure were largely overlooked.

The continuation of 'totally skewed and lopsided development' would lead to increased rural to urban migration. In addition this will further strain the urban infrastructure and put a break on all-around economic development. Globalization has incurred the urbanization. According to the World Bank urban areas in developing countries account for an estimated 60-80 percent of GDP. India is witness to massive migration. Traditional rural urban migration exists in India as villagers seek to improve opportunities and life styles. In 1991, 39 million people were migrated to urban areas.

Table-1 International Migration in India, 1981 and 1991

		1981 (Million)	% Population to	1991 (Million)	% Population to
Total Migrants	a) Intercensal	80.10	12.17	80.95	9.65
	b) Lifetime	195.8	29.50	222.62	26.55
Male Migrants	a) Intercensal	30.40	8.85	26.68	6.17
	b) Lifetime	57.20	16.8	59.99	13.88
Female Migrants	a) Intercensal	51.50	15.72	54.27	13.45
	b) Lifetime	138.6	43.10	162.63	40.32
Rural Male Migrants	a) Intercensal	16.30	6.27	13.36	4.08
	b) Lifetime	30.00	11.09	30.36	9.28
Urban Male Migrants	a) Intercensal	14.20	16.86	13.32	11.69
	b) Lifetime	27.10	32.4	29.64	26.01

Source: Migration Tables, 1991, Census, Govt. of India.

As for the 1991 Census 222.62 million people were migrated; but internal migration declined to 26.55 per cent in 1991 from 29.5 per cent in 1981. (Table-I) Female migrants number (13.45) Males (6.17). The former constitute 40.3 per cent of the total female population, compared to only (13.88) per cent in the case of Males. Thus, rural urban migration is a contributing factor to the growth of the urban population. India's largest cities urban population is given below table-2.

Table-2 India's Largest Cities / Urban Areas

Rank		City/ Urban area
1	Mumbai (Bombay)	16368000
2	Kolkata (Calcutta)	13217000
3	Delhi	12791000
4	Chennai	6425000
5	Banglore	5687000
6	Hyderabad	5534000
7	Ahmadabad	4519000
8	Pure	3756000
9	Surat	2811000
10	Kanpur	2690000
11	Jaipur	2324000
12	Lucknow	2267000
13	Nagpur	2123000
14	Patna	1707000
15	Indore	1639044
16	Vadodhara	1492000
17	Bhopal	1455000
18	Coimbatore	1446000
19	Ludhiana	1395000
20	Kochi	1355000
21	Vishakapatnam	1329000
22	Agra	1321000
23	Vasanasi	1212000
24	Madurai	1195000
25	Meerut	1167000
26	Nashik	1152000
27	Jabalpur	1117000
28	Jamshedpur	1102000
29	Asansol	1090000
30	Dhanbud	1064000
31	Faridabad	1055000
32	Allahabad	1050000

Source: Census India 2001, Govt. of India.

Above table gives the population rank order of cities. An estimated fifteen million people followed into and settled into the urban areas of India. It has continued in migration from rural areas. Demographically, Bombay has one of the highest population densities in the world. It houses 1,60,000 people per square mile.

In 1998, 47 per cent of the world's population lived in cities as opposed to 29 per cent in 1950. Globalization is leading to increased urbanization. According to the World Bank urban areas in developing countries account for an estimated 60-80 per cent of GDP. Urban population mainly have growth access to water and sanitation services.

Table- 3 Urbanization in India

States	Rural to urban migrants as a percentage of urban population 1991-2001	Percentage of Urban population
Andhra Pradesh	6.72	27.08
Assam	7.12	12.72
Bihar	6.28	10.47
Gujarath	10.63	37.35
Hariyana	11.45	29.00
Kerala	6.99	25.97
Madhya Pradesh	9.50	26.67
Maharashtra	10.41	42.40
Orissa	10.97	14.97
Punjab	7.63	33.95
Rajasthan	6.18	23.98
Tamilnadu	3.34	43.86
Uttar Pradesh	4.44	20.78
West Bengal	4.83	28.03
All India	7.32	27.78

Source: Migration table, Census, Govt. of India.

Above table shows that there is regional variability in urbanization trends and increased urbanization has seen rise of the middle classes and is predominantly change the life style of the people.

Table-4 Percentage of Urban Population

	1980	1981	1989	1990	1999	2000	2001	2010	2020	2030
INDIA	23	23	25	26	27	28	28	30	35	41

Source: Migration table; Census, Govt. of India.

The above table provides a picture on the nature of the urbanization in India. 1950 the degree of urbanization was estimated at 17.3 per cent by 2000 this figure stood at 28 per cent and it is projected that by 2030 the figures could be a high as 41 per cent.

INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR MIGRATION

It is pertinent to look into the various factors influencing migration of the people from one place to another. In the case of unskilled and semi skilled jobs, it is generally true that any shift from the primary to the secondary and tertiary sectors represents migration initially, this kind of migration is usually within the rural areas- from agricultural to non – agricultural and subsequently from rural to urban areas. Similarly more literate and higher educated people are migrating to the metropolitan cities than the illiterates.

The push factors may be important in the case of the educated.⁸ Royal Commission on labour in India stated that migration has always arisen mainly from the difficulty of finding an adequate livelihood in villages and this is the predominant force which compels the Indian villages to seek employment in urban areas. Pressure on land has been increasing steadily for a long time and rise in general standard of living has made this pressure more felt. Small size of land holdings combined with large sized families was also reasons for migration. Rayan suggested that inadequate access to income generating land also encourages migration. The uneven development between urban and rural and between different areas has resulted in the movement of large mass of labour migrants from one area to another.⁹ In addition to economic factors influencing migration, the social cultural and demographic factors are also influence people to migrate. Finally, Indian data suggests that, the interdependent between town and village is well advanced, a highly differentiated migration flow can take place and is increased by a mal-distribution of village resources.¹⁰ In general, migration is a necessary element of normal population redistribution and equilibrium and an arrangement for making the maximum use of available manpower. Industrialization was also important factor for migration from rural areas to towns. "In India, migration from rural and urban areas is taking place at a faster rate through the industrialization process is very low.

CONCLUSIONS

The following measures are suggested to rationalize migration from rural areas to urban areas. It is observed that uneven development between town and village has resulted in the movement of large mass of labour migrants from one area to another.

1. The problem can be satisfactorily solved if villages become the focal point of development. We have to develop rural areas by creating infrastructure facilities and job opportunities there.
2. By funding much needed rural infrastructure such as roads, drinking water and sanitation facilities the gap between the rural and urban could be bridged.
3. Agriculture by itself cannot solve the problem of rural poverty and unemployment. The solution lies in rapid rural industrialization. Village life can be made attractive provided non agricultural job opportunities are created in the country side on a massive scale.
4. The rural economy should be diversified with special stress on agro-based industries, animal husbandry, poultry farming; bee – keeping etc. Provision of better irrigation facilities will increase not only farm productivity but also provide employment thorough the year by encouraging multiple cropping.
5. Measures should be initiated to develop institutional capability in rural areas. There exists institutional potential even in the traditional rural sector. When this is properly utilized, it ensures effective implementation of policies and plans directed at low income groups.

The measures should also include: (a) effective implementation of land reforms; (b) expansion of non-form employment opportunities; (c) enforcement of minimum wages; (d) improving rural infrastructure like roads and communications; (e) special attention to development of industries in rural areas; and (f) strengthening the self employment sector. If we want to stop further urbanization through migration of rural people we have to develop rural areas, and create infrastructural facilities and job opportunities in the rural sector. As Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that a self-sufficient village economy and self reliant village community and full utilization of local resource for development process are major pillars of development.

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